



The Iowa Review

Volume 46
Issue 1 *Spring 2016*

Article 3

2016

[Like any light now breaking in the sky]

Joyelle McSweeney

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Recommended Citation

McSweeney, Joyelle. "[Like any light now breaking in the sky]." *The Iowa Review* 46.1 (2016): 8 Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.7676>

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JOYELLE MCSWEENEY

[Like any light now breaking in the sky]

Like any light now breaking in the sky
I am the arrow: I ride and I decline.
My throat's an ulcerated weapons cache
where radioactive gunsights bleed their toxins
in groundwater. Birds rear up, deranged,
their mitochondria are scrambled. They cannot steer
by stars. I'm as disheveled: my lungs
raise two black flags inside in warning, boil
like frogs, flap, release fawn-colored scum. Skimmed
from my lips, my only utterance, my spit
is studied for its signs. Gross sibyl. When Death
leans in, his staff's encircled by a viper.
I adorn him with my spittle, with my cipher.